

CHAPTER 2: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The issues and opportunities, as listed and described in the Community Assessment Report submitted to the state on February 16, 2007, were intended to capture various issues for consideration during the development of the Community Agenda, which is Phase II of the Comprehensive Plan process. The identification of issues and opportunities began with an initial listing of issues, developed by Sandy Springs planning staff and its planning consultants, then reviewed, modified, and accepted as a list for further exploration by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC is a 28-member body of Sandy Springs residents appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council to ensure that the Comprehensive Plan process reflects general community values, and that there is a free flow of information to and from the community.

The initial list of issues and opportunities was prepared prior to completion of the Community Assessment and the Technical Appendix in Phase I of the Comprehensive Plan process. Other issues and opportunities were added based on CAC and community input on the Community Assessment Report during November 2006.

This chapter presents the final list of issues and opportunities the Sandy Springs community has chosen to address in the Community Agenda. Each of these issues or opportunities from the Community Assessment has resulted in the development of various policies and implementation measures to be included later in this Community Agenda.

To assist with determining how to respond to the 80 issues and opportunities of the Community Assessment, each was translated into a question or statement, and made available as questionnaires for citizens to provide their input at 2 visioning workshops held on January 31st and February 1, 2007, in the Sandy Springs City Hall. The City of Sandy Springs also placed the questionnaire on the City's website and numerous additional responses were received. Responses were compiled and the questionnaire results have provided in the appendix of this document. The questionnaire results were also distributed to the CAC for their use as a guide to the development of the future policies to be included in the Community Agenda. These future policies are intended to respond to the issues and opportunities included in the Community Assessment and presented in this chapter.

POPULATION

1. Determining desired future population in Sandy Springs

The comprehensive plan can be used as a growth management tool, ultimately influencing (through land use policies) the timing and amount of population growth. Some citizens might prefer to limit population levels and set policies that limit growth, either directly or indirectly. Others anticipate that zoning already approved will result in higher population levels than desired. Should Sandy Springs set a "desired" or "target" future population level?

2. Accommodating additional group quarters population

As the residents of Sandy Springs age, there may be a need for new and different group quarters accommodations, such as nursing homes.

3. Serving an increasingly diverse population

The population in Sandy Springs may become increasingly diverse, given increases in the region in Hispanic and Latino populations. If such an increase occurs in Sandy Springs in the future, this may have an impact on how Sandy Springs provides and delivers services (e.g., bilingual police officers and clerks, publication of city newsletters in Spanish, etc.)

HOUSING

4. Specifying the desired mix of housing types and altering the existing mix

At issue is whether the comprehensive plan can, and should, attempt to alter the mix of housing unit types (detached, attached, Hi-rise, mid-rise, fee simple townhomes, single-family homes, apartments, etc.). For instance, some residents and leaders would like to reduce the number of apartments, while housing needs assessments may call for more affordable rental housing opportunities. Some communities use the comprehensive planning process as an opportunity to establish targets for mixes of housing units and then design their regulations (including the zoning of land) to pursue the target mix.

5. Addressing affordable housing needs

Sandy Springs faces challenges if it wants to provide housing that is affordable for low- and moderate-income households and workforce households (which include not only blue-collar workers but also police officers, teachers, and other young professionals who would like to own homes in Sandy Springs but can only rent their accommodations or cannot afford to live in the city at all. The Community Agenda should articulate policies regarding whether, and if so, how, the City will address affordable housing needs.

6. Guiding the City's community development program

Sandy Springs is in the process of preparing its federal 5-year Consolidated Plan to qualify for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) "entitlement" funds in 2008 (see glossary). Federal regulations published at 24 CFR Part 570.201 provide the eligible activities that will assist the City in focusing the future emphasis of its community development program. Some of these eligible activities include: acquisition of real property; acquisition, construction, reconstruction and rehabilitation of public facilities and improvements; clearance activities; public services; relocation payments; financial services to microenterprises; technical assistance; and other uses as specified at 24 CFR Part 570.201.

7. Providing for "starter" housing

Sandy Springs is an affluent community, and its detached, single-family housing stock serves primarily upper-middle and upper income families and households. A majority of the lower-priced housing units are rental. With the exception of some older neighborhoods with smaller homes, there are very limited opportunities for first-time, low- and moderate-income homebuyers. At issue is whether the City's Community Agenda should strive to provide for "starter" housing (see glossary).

8. Considering mixed-income housing

One opportunity for promoting more affordable housing in Sandy Springs is to consider a policy of providing mixed-income housing for purchasers at a variety of incomes in the same development or neighborhood.

9. Exempting affordable housing from development impact fees

Georgia's development impact fee law authorizes the waiver of impact fees for affordable housing, if the local government has an adopted policy to that effect in its comprehensive plan. If affordable housing is exempted, the impact fee enabling statute requires the City to pay the impact fee so waived with revenue sources other than impact fees.

10. Responding to homelessness

At issue is the role that City government might play in the future in attempting to respond to the needs of homeless persons and households in Sandy Springs.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

11. Diversifying the City's economic base

Sandy Springs has few if any industrial or manufacturing uses. The city has a healthy, robust economy, but one that is focused in certain employment sectors (e.g., finance, insurance, real estate, telecommunications, etc.). At issue is whether the City should try to diversify its economy to include some manufacturing or industrial uses, and if so, how such uses can be accommodated in the city.

12. Encouraging and financing redevelopment

The citywide vision emphasizes the redevelopment of properties along Roswell Road, and the revitalization and redevelopment of the Sandy Springs Town Center. There are opportunities in the Community Agenda to articulate more specific strategies for redevelopment and the appropriate options for financing the redevelopment for the Roswell Road corridor, in the Sandy Springs Town Center and other such areas. All financing options to facilitate the redevelopment of these areas should be considered.

13. Incorporating "place making" principles in Town Center redevelopment efforts

The City's vision calls for establishment of a "sense of place" with a City Center, designed for gathering and social interaction. How will these be articulated in the Community Agenda in a way that will influence Town Center redevelopment efforts?

14. Reconsidering the Tax Allocation District

Fulton County had established a redevelopment area in Sandy Springs, within which the financing technique called "tax increment financing" (see glossary) could be used. Further discussion is needed to determine whether the City should pursue tax increment financing, and other such redevelopment financing options, as a part of its redevelopment strategies.

15. Emphasizing transit-oriented development

The citywide vision calls for concentration of new development within areas served by transit, and there is an opportunity in the planning process to link that vision to the City's economic development strategies.

16. Leveraging private reinvestment with municipal capital projects

There is an opportunity for the City to use its investment in civic buildings to strategically leverage and enhance private reinvestment in redevelopment areas.

17. Exempting extraordinary economic development from impact fees

Georgia's development impact fee law authorizes the waiver of impact fees for extraordinary economic development, if the local government has an adopted policy to that effect in its comprehensive plan. If extraordinary economic development is exempted, the impact fee enabling statute requires the City to pay the impact fee so waived from revenue sources other than impact fees.

18. Assessing the role of home-based businesses

The City's zoning ordinance allows for home occupations. Over time, with changes in the national and global economy, more and more people are able to work from home and/or establish home-based businesses. At issue is whether the economic development strategy of the City should emphasize or encourage home occupations given other, possible conflicting objectives of protecting neighborhoods (see also discussion under "land use, protected neighborhoods."

NATURAL RESOURCES

19. Protecting waters

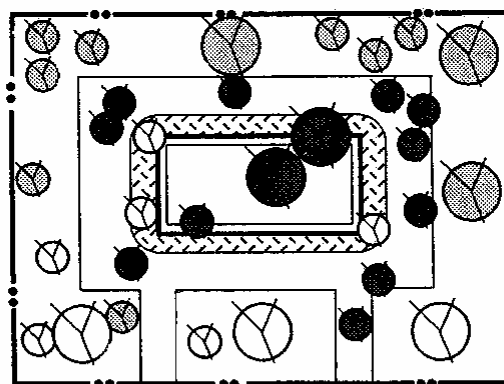
In addition to federal and state regulations, the City of Sandy Springs has a number of regulatory measures in place to protect the quality of streams, drainage ways, and the Chattahoochee River. Despite such protection measures, however, water quality does not comply with certain federal requirements. At issue is whether local protection measures already in place are adequate, or whether the citizenry desires higher levels of local protection in order for water quality to meet existing standards.

20. Protecting trees during development




Sandy Springs has completed the creation of its tree protection ordinance. The ordinance update was initiated to determine if previous protection measures in place at the time of the City's incorporation were sufficient for the protection of forests and trees were adequate.

21. Maintaining and enhancing tree canopy

At issue is whether the City has adequate information regarding its tree canopy, and whether specific measures are needed to maintain and enhance the city's tree canopy (versus a focus simply on trees).



LEGEND

-  Existing Tree
-  Tree to be removed
-  Tree to be replaced

Illustrative, conceptual tree protection for a given site.

22. Limiting or regulating development on steep slopes

Sandy Springs does not have a specific ordinance that regulates development on steep slopes. At issue is whether additional ordinance provisions are needed to regulate land development on steep (15 percent grade or higher) slopes.



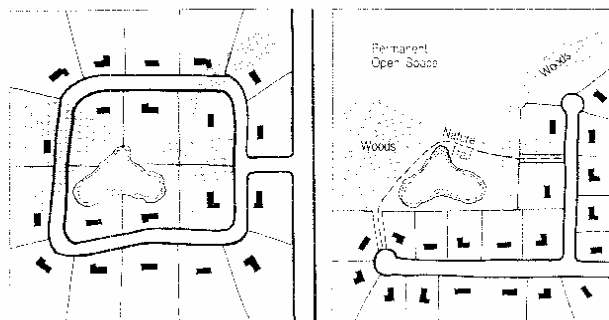
Steep slope (left) and residence constructed on rock outcropping (Old Riverside Drive).

23. Identifying and protecting scenic views and sites

There is an opportunity, during preparation of the Community Agenda, to identify areas with scenic views, and/or sites that have scenic value, and to determine whether specific measures should be included in the comprehensive plan to protect or enhance such scenic views and sites.

24. Protecting resources and promoting open space through conservation subdivisions

Sandy Springs does not have a conservation subdivisions ordinance. At issue is whether Sandy Springs has enough vacant land with subdivision potential left to warrant a conservation subdivision ordinance, which would promote the protection of natural resources and promote additional permanently protected open space in the city. Also at issue is whether additional density should be allowed in exchange for providing more open space.



Comparison of Conventional and Conservation Subdivision Designs

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

25. Updating the historic resources survey

Since the historic resources survey was conducted some ten years ago, some structures may have been demolished, while others may have earned eligibility as a historic resource during that time. An updated historic resources survey would give a more accurate reflection of the status of historic resources in the city. At issue is whether a survey update should be included in the City's short-term work program.

26. Preserving individual landmarks or historic districts by ordinance

Sandy Springs has only a few historic resources remaining. At issue is whether the City needs and wants to adopt a local historic preservation ordinance, which would establish a Historic Preservation Commission and establish a process for reviewing building demolitions and additions or new structures for appropriateness with their historic context.

27. Staffing for historic preservation

Sandy Springs may want to consider providing staff with some expertise in historic preservation. Such staff members might encourage and assist property owners with nominations to the National Register of Historic Places (see glossary), using or reusing vacant historic buildings, and educating the public on the benefits of historic preservation.

28. Developing a heritage tourism program

There is an opportunity for Sandy Springs to consider developing a heritage tourism program, which could be a part of its overall economic development strategy.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

29. Ensuring adequate water and sewer capacity

After determining the amount, intensity, and location of future growth in Sandy Springs, there is a need to determine whether sufficient water and sewer capacity will be available at the time such development occurs.

30. Financing capital improvements with development impact fees

The City has already committed to initiating a development impact fee program. Such a program raises various issues, such as the impact on affordable housing and economic development (and whether waivers should be permitted).

31. Determining level-of-service standards and/or performance measures for facilities

Level-of-service standards for various City facilities and services are currently under development. This process is described in Chapter 7 of this document. For those facilities on which the City will collect an impact fee, level of service standards are required by state rule 110-12-2. For other facilities and services, such standards are optional. Similarly, performance standards might be used to guide future planning and provision of certain facilities and services in Sandy Springs.

32. Assuring equity in facility and service provision

There may be segments of the city's population and areas of the city that are inadequately served by existing public facilities and services. At issue is whether such inequities exist, and if so, how they can be reconciled.

33. Addressing social service needs and homelessness

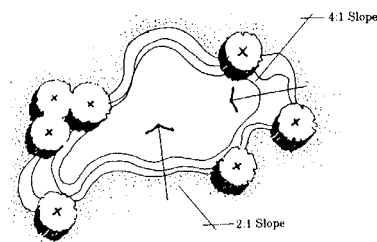
At issue is the role city government can, and should, play in terms of municipal services and facilities directed at social service needs and homelessness.

34. Assessing opportunities for public-private ventures in service provision

There is an opportunity for the plan to focus attention on innovative public-private ventures in the arrangement, provision, and delivery of various public facilities and services.

35. Developing a stormwater utility

The City has determined that a stormwater utility is a viable approach to correcting existing storm drainage problems, maintaining stormwater detention ponds, and enhancing stormwater management (and, therefore, water quality). The City will begin the development of its program in early summer 2007.



**Maintenance of existing stormwater ponds
requires dedicated funding sources.**

36. Addressing infiltration and inflow problems in the sewer system

During public testimony it was pointed out that stormwater flows into sanitary sewer manholes in some places of the city. There is an opportunity in the Community Agenda to identify this problem as a community concern and to determine how the Fulton County Department of Public Works can address such problems.

37. Complying with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Requirements

Sandy Springs, like other local governments, has responsibilities for insuring that its community facilities comply with ADA requirements. The Community Agenda represents an opportunity to fully assess how its facilities, including City Hall, parks, sidewalks, intersections, etc. meet all applicable requirements. Deficiencies to physical facilities should be remedied through the City's capital improvement program and Short-term Work Program. However, accessibility for all citizens is a foundational aspect of government. ADA compliance is not limited to facilities and should include a comprehensive plan for the integration of accessibility into all policies, procedures, programs, services, employment, as well as its physical facilities and properties. Throughout the process of developing the Community Agenda, particular emphasis should be placed on accessibility as it relates to pedestrian connectivity, housing, transportation and recreation and parks.

38. Designing and developing a City Hall complex

The City anticipates building its own municipal complex for administrative and public safety personnel. Major issues exist, such as when, how large, and where the City should invest in municipal capital facilities. The City recognizes the opportunity to use its future investment in civic buildings to strategically leverage and enhance private investment in redevelopment areas, while creating a signature civic presence for its city hall.

39. Promoting adequate public school education

Quality public and private schools are an important component of the fabric and attributes of a successful community. In addition to their role in the education of young people, their location and integration into the community can position them as important resources for not only their individual neighborhoods, but for the community at large. The City should explore intergovernmental strategies with the Fulton County Board of Education and others to ensure that all schools meet the City's goals of high quality education for its residents and the positive integration of school facilities in the community.

RECREATION AND PARKS

40. Providing additional park land in light of land scarcity

Land is at a premium in Sandy Springs, and there are few large, contiguous parcels of land remaining within the present corporate limits that are suitable for the development of parks. Such limits on land will require Sandy Springs to think more innovatively about adding to its parks and recreation land inventory.

41. Determining innovative ways to address future park needs in light of land scarcity

Given the lack of large parcels for new park development in Sandy Springs, the City has an opportunity to consider new, innovative ways to responding to future park needs. Such

innovations might include, for instance, using power line and sewer easements for trails, designating “community greens” within developed areas, reclaiming space behind shopping centers or within shopping center parking lots, installing gardens on top of buildings, and considering “community based asset management strategies, among others.

42. Considering reuse of vacant “big box” retail stores and strip centers for community centers

There is an opportunity, when large retail establishments or shopping centers become vacant, to lease spaces for community centers and related recreation functions. Such opportunities should be further assessed in the Recreation and Parks Master Plan.

43. Addressing geographic imbalances in the provision of parks

It has been observed that there are significant geographic areas within the city that lack parks. The Recreation and Parks Master Plan should consider the possibility of providing a more even distribution of parks in the city, subject to the limits on available land for park development.

44. Improving accessibility to parks

Traffic congestion in Sandy Springs may limit accessibility by residents to parks. Similarly, the Recreation and Park Master Plan needs to consider ADA accessibility requirements.

45. Improving connectivity among parks and to parks

Linkages between existing parks, and connectivity to adjacent community recreation systems, are considered inadequate. There is an opportunity to improve connectivity in the process of preparing the Recreation and Parks Master Plan.

46. Balancing active and passive recreational opportunities

While Sandy Springs has some active parks, its supply of park trails and passive recreation opportunities are considered deficient, with the exception of the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area sites. There is an opportunity to consider the most desired balance between active and passive recreational opportunities and to promote desired balance of such facilities in upcoming capital improvement programs.

47. Diversifying the types of recreational facilities and opportunities

The public participation process of developing the Recreation and Parks Master Plan resulted in the identification of a wide range of facilities that residents of the community would like to be considered in developing and expanding the Sandy Springs recreation system. Facilities most mentioned include dog parks, playfields, age-specific playgrounds, trail systems, community centers, recreation centers, and a swimming center.

48. Partnering with schools and private industry

There are opportunities to provide for the use of school recreational facilities by the City. There are also opportunities to partner with businesses in the provision of recreation and parks.

Those opportunities should be explored during the process of preparing the Recreation and Parks Master Plan.

49. Considering additional recreational opportunities of the Chattahoochee River

There is an opportunity to promote greater utilization of the Chattahoochee River as a recreational resource.

50. Paying for new recreation and park facilities

Sandy Springs intends to institute a development impact fee program for recreation and parks. Such funding source, if approved, will only address the recreation and park needs generated by new development, and impact fees cannot be used to fund any existing deficiencies. Additionally, parks in the city are going to need significant maintenance; the City's capital improvement program will need to identify maintenance projects and funding for them.

51. Considering development "set aside" requirements for parks and greenspaces

Sandy Springs might consider whether developers can "set aside" land for parks as part of planned new projects and redevelopment efforts. This potential opportunity must be considered in light of legal limitations and the City's intentions to charge a recreation and park impact fee.

52. Continuing support for Sandy Springs Conservancy projects

There is an opportunity for the Recreation and Park Master Plan to describe how to coordinate future municipal efforts with the Sandy Springs Conservancy. The plan can also articulate how the City will continue its support for the implementation of Sandy Springs Conservancy projects (e.g., Great Park, Abernathy Greenway and Pedestrian Bridge).

53. Articulating clearly the City's intentions for river and stream greenways

During the public participation process concern was raised about green strips (reflecting conservation) of private properties abutting the Chattahoochee River. It is important to note that these green strips represent the Chattahoochee River corridor regulated by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC). Both the City and the ARC review potential development that may result in impervious surfaces or cause land disturbance within the 2000' corridor as regulated by the Metropolitan River Protection Act (MRPA). In addition, further restrictions apply within the corridor including a 50' undisturbed buffer and 150' impervious surface setback. As shown on the Character Area Map, this area does not reflect any future plans for a public park or public access at this time.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION

54. Participating in the Fulton County Service Delivery Strategy

The local planning requirements require that Sandy Springs become a part of the Fulton County Service Delivery Strategy and that the comprehensive plan be consistent with that strategy. The particulars of crafting and negotiating the City's participation in that strategy are issues and opportunities to be confronted in the comprehensive planning process.

55. Cooperating with the Georgia Department of Transportation to “fix” Roswell Road

It is recognized that Roswell Road is a state highway (SR 9) and that any future plans to alter the design of the roadway must gain the approval of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Historically, GDOT has been reluctant to deviate from its accepted engineering design manuals. However, that prior stance is softening some as GDOT is increasingly open to smart growth principles such as “context-sensitive” street designs. The intergovernmental coordination element of the Community Agenda should recognize GDOT’s responsibilities but also articulate City objectives for improvement of Roswell Road and strategies on how to accomplish intergovernmental coordination to meet City objectives.

56. Implementing best practices for intergovernmental coordination

The Atlanta Regional Commission has best practices for intergovernmental coordination in its Regional Development Plan Guidebook. At issue is the extent to which Sandy Springs wants to, and can, implement such best practices.

57. Assessing the adequacy of existing intergovernmental agreements

A preliminary assessment of existing intergovernmental agreements is provided in the Technical Appendix. At issue is the need for further assessments, and whether new or modified intergovernmental agreements are or will be needed.

TRANSPORTATION

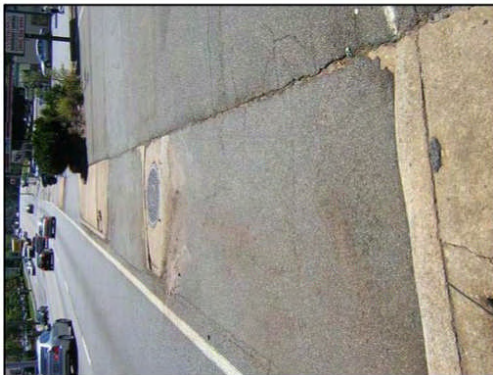
58. Enhancing traffic signal operations and safety

Traffic signal operations control movements at intersections, where through movement capacity is most limited. An optimally timed and coordinated signal system can significantly reduce travel delay and stops along a corridor. Intersection safety is also important, as intersections typically have more conflict points and experience more crashes than roadway segments. Improvements to reduce conflicts and enhance driver expectancy can reduce crash frequency and severity.

59. Reducing traffic congestion at “hot spots”

Traffic congestion along arterials typically occurs where two major roads cross, limiting the available green time for each road. Reducing congestion at these “hot spots” can reduce overall travel time.

ISSUES TO ADDRESS



- Eliminate unnecessary curb cuts
- Create adequately sized, continuous pedestrian facilities
- Construct curbs along sidewalks to separate driving and pedestrian lanes
- Install shade trees along streets

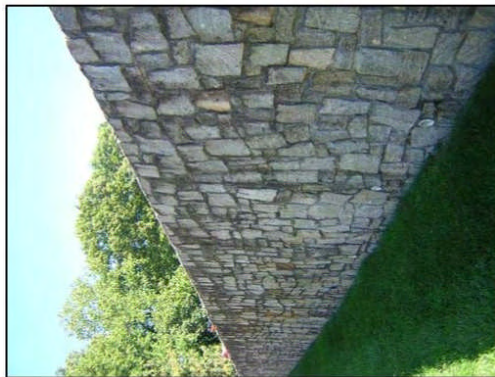


- Provide permanent trash receptacles and benches at transit stops
- Separate parking from sidewalks using plant material, low walls or curbing (continuous separation rather than individual curb stops)



- Minimize the aesthetic impact of overhead utility lines by undergrounding, relocating to one side, or partial screening with appropriately sized street trees

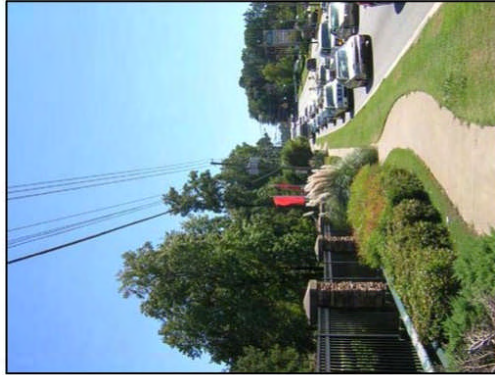
CHARACTER TO MAINTAIN



- Continue use of native stone masonry throughout the corridor
- Examples of stone masonry are found throughout the corridor from many past decades



- Continue to improve pedestrian facilities
- Future streetscape improvements should conform to the approved Sandy Springs streetscape standards
- Screen parking areas from sidewalks with vegetation or low walls



- Require effective landscape buffers in new construction and redevelopment projects
- Continue to screen guardrails using plant material
- Masonry piers are used to support metal fencing
- Curvilinear sidewalk alignments can be incorporated to respond to landscape buffers, where space permits

60. Providing mobility for trips through, to/from, and within the city

People travel along the streets of Sandy Springs for a variety of trip purposes. Local trips satisfy needs within communities and between neighborhoods and commercial areas. Trips to and from Sandy Springs are made by those who work elsewhere and/or those who choose to satisfy a portion of their shopping and recreation outside the city. Longer distance trips through Sandy Springs are made by those who live and work beyond the city. The transportation system must provide mobility for all of these trips purposes.

61. Establishing a grid network to provide options for travel

Connectivity of the roadway network can provide additional options for travel in congested areas. A well developed grid allows dispersion of traffic over several roads. Over time, the various routes tend towards providing similar travel time. In a less comprehensive fashion, additional roadway connections can provide multiple paths for travelers to use in accessing the main roadway, reducing congestion at critical intersections. It can also provide an alternative to travel on congested arterials for those making local trips to destinations along a busy arterial corridor.

62. Improving availability of transit service

Transit is a key component to providing travel alternatives to the automobile. Frequent local transit service can provide an extension to the walking environment for travel within activity areas. Other local trips can feed activity areas so that users can avoid activity center parking and congestion. Longer distance transit trips can provide higher speed access to nearby and distant activity areas. Transit availability and frequency of service are two important factors in attracting riders as an alternative to automobile travel.

63. Incorporating BRT and other premium transit in Sandy Springs

Transit along local streets is subject to the same traffic delays as automobiles, limiting its potential effectiveness in saving time for travelers. Incorporation of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or other premium transit options in Sandy Springs can provide travel time advantages along key routes. These travel time savings are critical to encouraging people to park their cars and utilize transit.

64. Satisfying parking needs in activity centers

As activity centers grow, satisfying parking needs is important to maintain the viability and attractiveness of the activity centers. Excess parking can lead activity center users to make frequent short trips via automobile within the activity center, limiting the effectiveness of pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes. Limited parking can cause increases in traffic congestion, as drivers must circle the area multiple times to find a place to park. Satisfying parking needs should take both ends of the spectrum into account.

65. Calming traffic to enhance safety while maintaining connectivity

The residential neighborhoods were identified as one of the City's primary assets in discussions with the Citizen Advisory Committee. Preserving the integrity and safety within the neighborhoods is critical to the future of Sandy Springs. Traffic calming has been used effectively in many areas of the Atlanta area to enhance safety along residential streets.

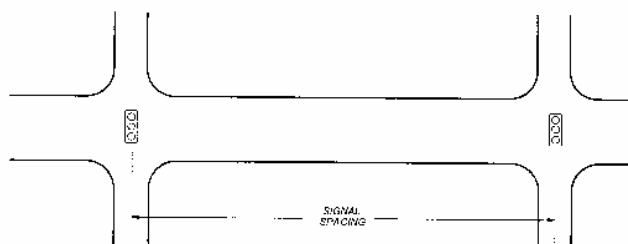
Although many potential traffic calming techniques have been employed throughout the United States, speed humps are the most common element employed in the Atlanta area for residential speed control. The advantage of traffic calming is that it can provide control of speeds without reducing connectivity, as would be the case with a road closure. In addition to traffic calming measures, the designation of “no truck” routes is a useful tool to calm traffic and enhance safety in neighborhoods.

66. Providing sidewalk and bicycle lanes for travel to/from destinations and access to transit

Sidewalks and bicycle lanes are critical transportation infrastructure elements necessary for providing alternative travel options versus automobile traffic. Providing connectivity to existing community facilities (such as schools, libraries, and parks) is an important use of the pedestrian and bicycle network. Providing additional connectivity to key transit facilities/routes and activity centers is another critical area to reduce the need for automobile travel.

67. Managing access points along corridors

Providing access to adjacent properties is one of the primary purposes of a road. However, when the road is a congested urban arterial such as Roswell Road, frequent parcel by parcel access can degrade operations due to the friction of turning vehicles and can provide extra conflict points, increasing crash potential. Effective management of access points can preserve through capacity along arterials. However, careful planning of access for key areas is critical to avoid impacts to properties.



**Providing adequate spacing of traffic signals
is one of many access management principles.**

68. Assessing the need or feasibility of an additional river crossing

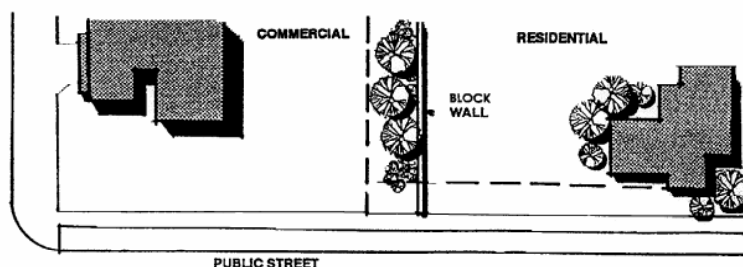
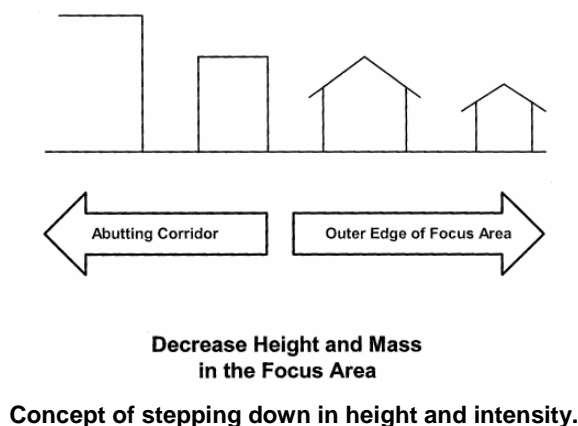
At one time, there was a proposal “floated” in transportation plans to provide for a new crossing of the Chattahoochee River at Morgan Falls. While that proposal was reportedly opposed by Cobb County, there is an opportunity during preparation of the Multi-modal Transportation Plan to address whether an additional crossing of the Chattahoochee River would be feasible and desirable.

69. Introducing a two-acre minimum category in the future land use plan

The lowest density residential category shown on the future land use plan map of the interim comprehensive plan (see glossary) is one unit per acre. However, there are residential neighborhoods in Sandy Springs that are considerably lower than that (i.e., one unit per two acres or more). There is sentiment to create a new residential land use category in the future land use plan to correspond with two-acre zoning, and protect those neighborhoods from infill development on one-acre lots, which would otherwise be considered appropriate based on policies in the interim comprehensive plan.

70. Addressing the interface between protected neighborhoods and commercial areas, especially within the Roswell Road corridor

Is the City now using best practices to minimize light, sound, traffic, and other possible conflicts between non-residential uses and single-family neighborhoods? Are there other best practices to establish firm boundaries or reduce incompatibilities of commercial developments, particularly when they abut residential areas which we wish to protect? Should increased buffers, setbacks, and/or step-back heights, be instituted for non-residential development to afford better protection to adjacent residential neighborhoods?



Buffers with vegetation and walls are customarily used to separate residential and commercial uses.

71. Addressing potential incompatibilities of large churches and schools in neighborhoods

Sandy Springs has witnessed significant growth in churches and large private schools. Such institutions are often permitted outright or conditionally within single-family neighborhoods. Churches, over time, have expanded their roles to include not only religious services but also education, day care, counseling, active recreation, and in some cases social services. Activities of such churches are not limited to Sunday services and one religious service during the week. As congregations grow, they can become less and less compatible with low-density residential use. At issue is whether the City's land use policies should place limitations or restrictions on large churches and similar institutions. The Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons

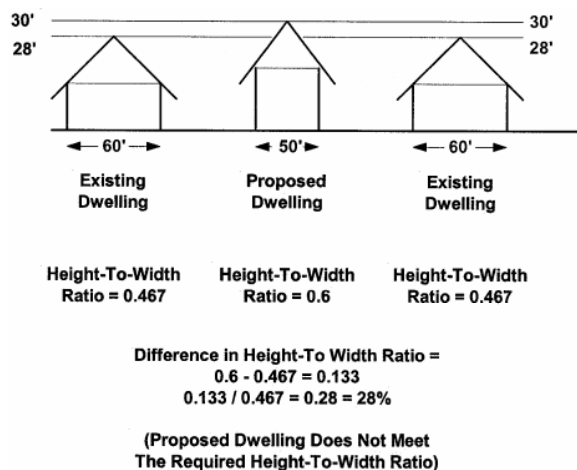
Act places some legal constraints on how local governments regulated churches; those legal limits must be taken into account if Sandy Springs proposes greater restrictions on churches.



Holy Innocents Church is a representative example of a church that has expanded its community functions over time. Pictured left is the original site of the church campus. Pictured right is the old James. L. Riley elementary school, which has been taken over by the church and operates as a school campus.

72. Addressing infill development issues

There is concern about the possibility of incompatible “infill” housing in protected neighborhoods, since residential infill development is often proposed at higher densities than exist in the surrounding neighborhood. What specific policies and measures can be developed, adopted and implemented to address these concerns?



Illustrative Height-To-Width Calculation

A “height-to-width ratio” is one mechanism to address compatibility of residential infill housing.

73. Addressing the compatibility of home-based businesses

The City’s zoning ordinance allows for home occupations. Over time, with changes in the national and global economy, more and more people are able to work from home and/or establish home-based businesses. At issue is whether the City’s zoning ordinance can be made more flexible to accommodate that trend, while maintaining the residential integrity of protected neighborhoods.

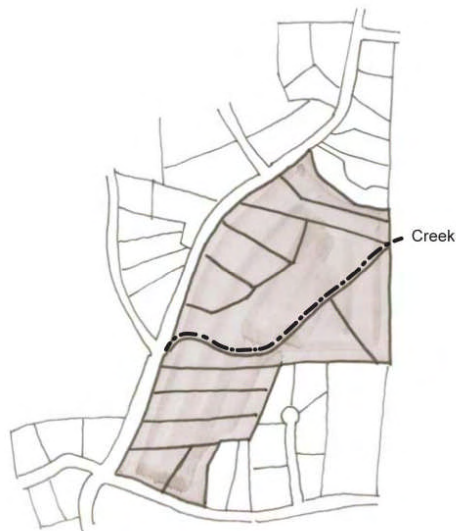
Illustrative Residential Infill Potential



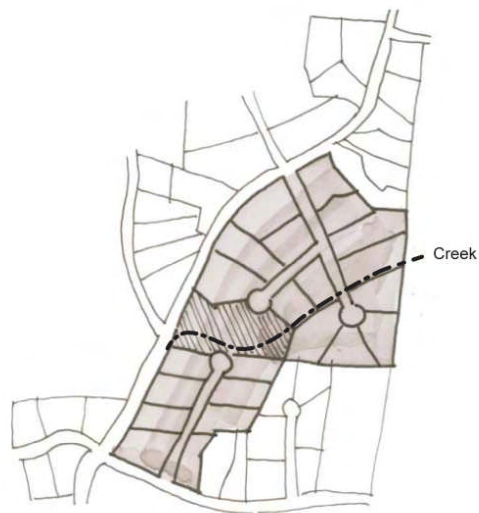
Before Infill Development
(5 Lots)



After Infill Development
(23 Lots)



Before Infill Development
(13 Lots)



After Infill Development
(22 Lots plus Greenspace)

LAND USE: HIGH DENSITY/MIXED USE

74. Considering form-based zoning

Sandy Springs' zoning ordinance uses conventional land use techniques. In its assessment of the City's Town Center redevelopment plans, the Livable Communities Coalition has been suggested that the City consider implementing form-based zoning (see glossary). Does form-based zoning hold any potential for implementing objectives for mixed-use character areas?

75. Reconsidering height limitations and contemplating floor-area ratios

Prior studies have suggested that, in order to promote redevelopment, the intensity and height controls of Sandy Springs' zoning ordinance may be too limiting and therefore work as barriers to redevelopment. Are the intensity and height controls, now in place, too limiting to be competitive? Does the use of Floor-Area Ratios (see glossary) increase the flexibility for achieving the objectives for mixed use character areas? In order to maintain protected neighborhoods, must Sandy Springs allow increased intensity, densities, and building height in areas designated for intense development? Is the vision of a Buckhead-style skyline acceptable for Sandy Springs, and if so, in what locations?

76. Redeveloping or converting older apartment complexes

Are greater heights and densities required in order to promote the redevelopment of older apartment complexes? Are high-rise projects with substantial open space an acceptable alternative to older garden apartments? Can mixed-use, live-work zoning offer sufficient incentives for redevelopment of aging multi-family communities?

77. Reassessing adopted policies about the particulars of live/work areas

Are the "live-work" descriptions in the interim comprehensive plan (see glossary) appropriate, including the locations and the descriptions of particulars?

78. Considering the need for special studies and/or small area plans

Are there areas in the city that require special study during the community assessment process? Will detailed planning efforts be needed beyond the basics of the Community Agenda?

LINKING LAND USE/TRANSPORTATION

79. "Fixing" Roswell Road

The strip commercial development pattern along Roswell Road is considered to be one of the least desirable land use characteristics in Sandy Springs. Solutions, in order to be successful, must combine transportation, land use, and urban design principles. What can be done to improve the function and appearance of the Roswell Road corridor?

80. Assessing the implications of major road improvements



Transportation projects can act as stimuli to further land use changes, which may be desirable or undesirable. What land use changes might occur when roads are widened, and what are the most appropriate policies to handle land use changes precipitated by transportation improvements? For instance, how will Sandy Springs respond to possible land use changes resulting from the proposed Hammond Drive Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line.